

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Federal “No Child Left Behind” Act:

Understanding Adequate Yearly Progress



FACT SHEET

August 29, 2003

Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the term used in the federal “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB), to describe the amount of academic progress expected of each school each year. The subjects included in AYP calculations are reading and math in grades 4, 8, and 11. Beginning in school year 2005-06, AYP will be calculated for grades 3-8 and grade 11. AYP calculations are currently based on assessment scores from the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) in reading and math. Additional data will be required in 2005-06 and onward, when AYP will be based on scores from grades 3-8 and 11. States are required to include a third indicator for AYP calculations; Maine has chosen to include average daily attendance for the elementary grades and graduation rates for high schools.

Establishing an AYP Starting Point

NCLB requires that states use a specific, prescribed formula to establish a level of performance in reading and math that must be met this year to demonstrate AYP. The starting point level of achievement (for each grade level and subject area required to be tested) is established using guidelines prescribed by the federal government, which include rank ordering all schools in a state by the percentage of students at or above proficiency (Maine’s “Meets Standards” plus “Exceeds Standards” levels on the MEA) then finding the percent proficient at the 20th percentile of enrollment. (See illustration below for a state with 6 schools tested for grade 4 reading.)

Schools Ranked by % At or Above Proficient in 4 th Grade Reading	School Enrollment	Total State Enrollment
School A 85%	90 students	500
School B 75%	100 students	410
School C 60%	100 students	310
School D 45%	100 students	210
School E 38%--S.P.	55 students—20 %	110
School F 32%	55 students	55

The total enrollment is 500 students, meaning that the 20th percentile is 100 students. By adding upward on the enrollment list to get to the 20th percentile (20%),

that level is reached in School E, which has a proficiency level of 38%. That becomes the starting point (S.P.) for grade 4 reading. The same process is to be used for each grade level and subject area tested.

Maine Starting Point Targets: 2003-04

Subjects	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
Reading	34%	35%	44%
Math	12%	13%	11%

This initial starting point for achievement must then be applied to the whole testing group (all students testing in 4th grade reading, for instance) and *for each one of identified sub-groups* (special education; limited English proficient; racial and ethnic groups of black, Native American, and multi-ethnic; and low socio-economic). Also, NCLB requires that a minimum of 95% of students continuously enrolled after October 1 participate in the testing program used for AYP purposes.

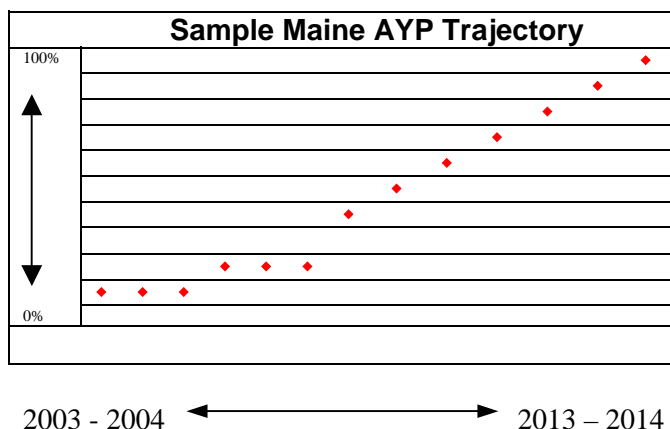
AYP status for a school is based on whole school and sub-group test scores and participation rates. If a school, for instance, had a single sub-group with less than 95% participation, the school does not make AYP. When all scores, participation rates, and other indicators are factored in, a district with schools at all three grades tested would have 84 ways to not make AYP.

A school must have failed to meet AYP for two consecutive years to be identified for NCLB sanctions. A school must *make* AYP for two consecutive years to then be removed from the list of identified schools.

Measuring AYP After the 2003-04 School Year

Once the starting points have been set, AYP will be measured against a line of improvement or trajectory that connects the starting point (38% in the illustration above) to 100% proficiency in the year 2014. States are permitted to shape lines of improvement flexibly. Maine’s trajectory uses a stair-step approach that will allow schools in our state to improve slowly in the first few years as improvements are phased in, and then

more dramatically once improvements are fully implemented. (See graphic below.)



Adapting NCLB to Maine's Small, Rural Schools

Maine DOE recognizes the need for making fair and reliable decisions about AYP. One of the key variables affecting reliability is the number of students in a testing group, or "n" size. Since Maine has many small schools, this is an important feature of our NCLB plan. For participation rates, the minimum n size for the test is 41. For performance the n size is 20, and at least two years of student performance data are used to calculate AYP. Maine's formula also includes the use of "confidence intervals," a statistical measure that creates a band or range around a school's testing score, similar to polling results that are qualified by a margin of error of, say, "plus or minus 4 points." Confidence intervals are used to account for the variability in school populations in a grade from year to year, and allow the state to be 95% confident that we are not identifying schools in error.

The use of confidence intervals, however, does not mean that small schools are not held accountable. Our NCLB accountability plan includes a provision for Maine DOE to review MEA scores and other indicators to ensure that all Maine schools are included in our accountability system.

A second type of calculation included in Maine's formula can also be used to recognize that all schools are at different levels of initial achievement. A school can make "safe harbor" if there is a 10% reduction from the previous year in the proportion of students not achieving proficiency.

A New Set of Rules Will Produce Different Results

Because the method of calculating AYP is changing dramatically this year, a different set of schools from

last year's set will likely be identified as not making AYP this year. Given the large number of ways for schools to not make AYP, Maine DOE anticipates that the number of identified schools will eventually be much greater than in years past. As we transition from the old method of determining AYP to the new rules, schools identified within the past two years will be evaluated using both methods to allow Maine DOE to provide consistent supportive services to schools whose achievement data indicate a continuing need for support.

Maine Expects Continuous Improvement and is Committed to Supporting Schools

In order for all schools to meet AYP under NCLB and continue to develop programs that allow all students to meet Maine's *Learning Results* standards, continuous improvement must become the central focus of all Maine schools. To help keep this idea at the forefront of Maine's accountability plan, the title for schools identified under the AYP provisions of NCLB will be "Continuous Improvement Priority Schools (CIPS)."

When a school is identified as a CIPS School, the Commissioner assigns a team with expertise in the areas of need identified in the school's MEA results and in an analysis of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). A CIPS Team will then work with each identified school over the course of the year—depending on the nature and extent of identified issues—to assist in planning for improvement.

Rewards and Sanctions

NCLB requires that states develop plans for rewarding and sanctioning local schools. Maine's approach to rewards, as outlined in our June accountability plan, will be to annually recognize two types of schools: those that demonstrate consistently high achievement, and those that demonstrate steady improvement.

In year one of not meeting AYP, the school must develop a plan for improvement. In year two, parents must be notified and given the option to transfer their children to a higher performing school in the district, and Title I funds must be spent specific ways as outlined in NCLB. In year three, tutoring and other supplemental educational services, paid for with federal funds, must be made available to low-income students at that school. NCLB outlines a range of interventions in the fifth and sixth years of not making AYP, many of which are not consistent with Maine statute and regulation. However, the federal law also permits ongoing school improvement consultations, which are more consistent with Maine.

